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long since passed away with all their earthly greatness and splendour; but the glorious orb that shone on them—that lighted them to the field of victory, or in the retirements of peace—that gave them vital warmth, or matured the fruits of the earth for their support and comfort—remains the same during the march of time, free from old age and decay, the best emblem of his great Creator, and one of the grandest manifestations of his goodness and power.

RECOLLECTIONS OF 1798.

To the EDITOR of the BELFAST MAGAZINE.

SIR,—THE account of the Battle of Ballynahinch, in your First Number, was interesting to many of your readers, especially at a distance from the scene of action. It introduced various minute circumstances which could only present themselves to an eye-witness, and which were calculated to give a more vivid conception of the whole scene, than the general descriptions of history. Indeed, unless such particulars be recorded now, by those who had opportunities of witnessing them, they will soon be entirely forgotten. Yet they seem on many accounts to be worthy of preservation. Besides the graphical views which they give of such events, they exhibit human feelings in singular and interesting combinations, which, happily, we have seldom opportunities of contemplating. They are also replete with instruction to all classes in the community. The recollection of troublesome periods should not be forgotten, even in times of peace and prosperity. They teach us to estimate aright those blessings which we are apt to undervalue, merely because they are common; and they check every wanton inclination to risk all the horrors of civil commotion, which must be equally shocking to the successful and the vanquished. Those who have once experienced them, will never after refer to them with indifference.—For such reasons, I am induced to mention a few circumstances connected with the battles of Saintfield and Ballynahinch, which came within my own observation, and are similar to those which are yet fresh in the recollection of others; but which may be instructive to many, who have had the happiness to live in more peaceful times.

The battle of Saintfield was fought in the afternoon of Saturday, June 9th, 1798. I know not, indeed, whether it should be called a regular engagement. There was then in the neighbourhood of the village, and at the place of rencontre, a hedge-row by the side of the road leading from Com-

ber ; behind which, the insurgents were placed in ambuscade, armed with pikes and other weapons of annoyance and defence. Ignorant of this position, and probably rash in advancing, the military, on march to the town, were all of a sudden attacked with great spirit. A soldier of the York Fencibles, a Frenchman, who had been in several battles in France, afterwards told me, that for danger and desperation, this skirmish exceeded any thing he had before witnessed. The soldiers were driven into disorder, and every man had to fight his way in the best manner he could, in opposition to the charged pike, and other weapons to which he had not been accustomed. The amount of the loss among the military I have not ascertained, but it included that of two officers who were killed. As some men with pikes stabbed the body of one of these officers, after he lay dead on the road, the soldiers of his company, exasperated perhaps with this atrocity, in scouring the country a day or two after the battle, committed various outrages. Among others, they shot a very sober and harmless man, at his own door, from whom they demanded money ; and though he gave them half-a-crown, all he possessed at the time, they immediately shot him through the heart. If the report of his neighbours may be credited, he had not been at the battle, or up in arms : nor was he at all implicated in the rebellion. Yet, in the wanton exercise of unlimited power, they took his precious life ; and threatened, with terrifying oaths, to shoot his poor wife, who, bathed in tears, stood trembling over the fallen and bleeding body of her expiring husband. Calling at the house of another peaceable man, they also demanded money ; but he having none to give, they ordered him to the street before his door, and with awful menaces set him up as a mark for their muskets ; nay, one of the company actually presented his piece, but did not fire. The Sunday following, the poor man, before the commencement of Divine Service, standing up amid a crowd of his fellow-worshippers, told his tale with strong feeling, to a rivetted audience ; and, as if he had again felt all the horrors of the trying scene, said, with strong emotion, " I thought when the soldier presented his gun, I felt the bullet passing through my heart."

After the battle of Saintfield, the people encamped for two days on a high and rugged hill, a mile from the town. This spot, known by the name of Creery Rocks, is thus rendered memorable in the neighbourhood. Here were assembled a motley crowd of men and boys, women and children. From this rendezvous, orderlies were dispatched to summon the country to turn out in arms. I was privileged with a sight of two of these messengers. One of them on horseback, clad in

green, traversed the neighbourhood, and, with sword in hand, commanded the youth in the name of the nation, to turn out, and fight for their country's rights. Another on foot, rather in disguise, as if impressed with fear, or conscious of guilt, privately whispered his errand to such as he thought he might venture to trust. The battle to which this poor fellow warned others, was fatal to himself; for he was blown to pieces by a cannon ball.—The camp ground was loaded with provisions, partly brought to the place by the friends of the cause, and partly taken without leave or pay, as the right of warriors. Many visited the camp from curiosity, who had no intention of fighting, and who never thought of the evil of appearing under arms in open rebellion. Many who were armed, were undisciplined, and knew nothing of the difficulty, nor reflected on the danger of meeting a regular force on the field of conflict. Some were clothed with offices to which they had been elected, and others assumed command; some were disposed to obey orders, and others not. A bold and enterprising individual, but rude in tactics, arrogating the rank of officer, and mustering a number from the disorderly crowd, gave the order "*dress.*" "D—n you," says an impudent novice, "I'll run my pike through your body, if you command *me* to dress." On the forenoon of one of the days of encampment, a few yeomen cavalry from Hillsborough, appeared on a distant eminence surveying the camp. At first sight they produced a little consternation; but on being observed not to be numerous, they were often saluted by a long and loud huzza, especially on retiring from the place of reconnoitre. Reports, wild as imagination could conceive in her highest flights, and false as fame had ever circulated, were wafted by hundreds, as if on the wings of the wind, from the country to the camp, and from the camp to the country, chiefly relating to the numbers on both sides.

At ten o'clock on the Saturday on which the battle of Saintfield took place, when passing on official duty through Ballynahinch, I observed the people of the town and neighbourhood assembled together, in and near the village, in little close groups. Work seemed to be given over; and consultations, apparently secret and unusual, occupied its place. I passed, not knowing what was the meaning of these new appearances, and the strange looks of some of the people. During the day, a party of the Castlewelling yeomanry brought a prisoner into town, under some suspicion or charge of disaffection. The inhabitants rescued him; one man was killed in the scuffle; and the military departed from the village without their prisoner. The rashness of the rescue, the blood that was shed, the sudden departure of the soldiers, the pro-

bability of their return to take farther vengeance, if not also some secret whisperings of guilt, filled the people with alarm ; and numbers of them fled from their houses in terrifying apprehensions that the military were on the road to burn the town. On my return, some of them met me ; the men, and especially the women, were in consternation, and some of them in tears. They told the story of the rescue ; they blamed its rashness, and lamented its consequences. They stated that one of their townsmen was shot, and mentioned the sudden departure of the military. They warned me, on my peril, not to pass through the town, for the army was coming to destroy the place.—Struck with the novelty and strangeness of the scene, and the tragical tale of the man's death ; ignorant also of the state of matters in the country ; my imagination was excited, and in a moment mustered such images of terror, as urged me to gallop my horse for two miles homeward, dreading every moment to meet an armed force, inflamed with martial vengeance. The possibility of being mistaken for one of the rescuers and the disaffected—the suspicious circumstance of riding so fast,—strong attachment to life—and forebodings of danger, all combined to increase my fears. Anxiety for my young wife and infant children at home whither I was hasting, had also no small share in my distress and perturbation. But getting in a little time a view of my cabin, and no red coats appearing, my imagination raised from its awful work ; fear subsided ; I began to travel more slowly, to chide myself for cowardice, and would fondly have persuaded myself into a belief, that I possessed still some share of the courage of a man. Before I reached my own house, I met one who I afterwards learned was a captain, leaving home to join the people in arms. As he had for years been my neighbour, he stopped to speak, and asked advice. I told him he would do well not to go, as I feared the cause which he had espoused, was not good ; and that nothing could be expected, but defeat. “ So I think,” was his reply ; but he hastily rejoined, “ I have embarked in the business and must go.” I next met a poor girl, warm in the cause, who had assisted in raising some gunpowder for action, that was buried in the earth for safety : but on trying its power, it exploded, and scorched dreadfully her arms and face.

Arriving at home, and finding all in peace and safety, my joy was as transcendant as my fears had been but a few minutes before. The soldiers that had been expected, and so much dreaded on Saturday, arrived in Ballynahinch on the morning of Sunday. They came exactly in time to rescue two or three yeomen, whom some of the more hardy insurgents had caught, and were just about to hang. The most active in

this proposed execution, had not been so much afraid as some other inhabitants of the village. Encouraged by the non-arrival of the soldiers, as expected on Saturday, by the safety of the night, and the return of a fine day, they were boldly proceeding without trial or ceremony, to despatch a few of the reputed enemy. The devoted victims escaped an awful death. Those who had seized, judged, and who were about to execute them, fled ; and the next week, a lad of seventeen, was hung at Newry, by order of a court-martial. The party that thus arrived at Ballynahinch, had been at the battle of Antrim, and were greatly fatigued and exhausted.—Being few in number, and knowing the issue of the affray at Saintfield, they judged it prudent to join a larger force, and wait till some regular attack could be made on the assembled multitude at Creevy Rocks, now flushed with success and increasing in numbers.

Sunday morning, June 10th, at an early hour, the news had spread that the people had gained the battle at Saintfield, with little or no loss ; and that the royal army was completely routed. Fame was busy with additions and exaggerations. The country was all in motion. Some hesitated what side to join. Some determined to join neither ; but were much perplexed in devising means of safety, from the soldiers and from the people. Goods and furniture were carried to places of concealment, and of supposed safety. Many had passed a sleepless night, not a little perplexed with real or imaginary dangers. Some left the neighbourhood, and the better to cover their departure from a scene of disturbance, and to escape in safety, summoned the people, as they themselves retreated from the theatre of action, to turn out and repair to the camp.—Having been engaged to assist in dispensing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in the neighbourhood, on this eventful Sabbath, I was busy pondering on the requisite services, when the report of two or three shots about sunrise, commenced my alarm for the day. They were fired after the flying party already mentioned, who had been preparing to hang the soldiers. My family, as well as myself, were agitated with painful uncertainty, whether it was my duty to venture abroad to the distance of seven miles, at such a time and in such a state of things. The place where the sacrament was to be dispensed, was not four miles from the encampment ; but I was engaged to assist, and my attendance was judged to be indispensable. At last I set out with no little agitation of mind. I was obliged to travel through bye roads, to escape interruptions from the insurgents or soldiers in arms. Not half a mile from home, a horseman in full uniform, and with a naked sabre, appeared on a height, one hundred paces be-

fore me, and directly on my way. This sight was not a little appalling to one unarmed, and at a time when the country was under martial law. I determined, however, to advance, and found the soldier to be a yeoman, who seemed, on meeting, to be quite as much afraid as myself. He said, with great frankness, that he had joined a yeomanry corps, taken the oath of allegiance, and, firmly determined to keep it, was going to join the king's forces at Blaris, near Lisburn.

After parting with him, various and opposite subjects of thought, crowded in quick succession, upon my agitated and busy mind: My family left behind, and the country in such commotion—strong doubts of the propriety of leaving a dearly beloved and timid wife, and helpless children—the difficulty of attempting to perform the services proposed at the house of God, in such singular and trying circumstances—the dangers of the way—the possibility of being taken and carried to the camp, as I passed within two miles of Creevy Rocks—the dread of desperadoes and villains, during a period of anarchy—the fears of death—the promises of the Scripture, and the consolations of religion—with nameless other reflexions, occupied my mind with such intenseness, that I at once wept for joy, sung sacred songs of triumph, and trembled for fear. At the houses which I passed, some were busy sharpening their pikes, and preparing for action; others, armed with these frightful weapons, were meeting me and crossing my path on their way to the camp. All I met, except the yeoman already mentioned, were strangers to me. What might be their thoughts of me I knew not, or how they might be disposed to treat me, riding alone and unarmed. I passed them with as little conversation as possible. Some seemed taken by surprise and alarmed, as if they had suspected my blue surtout to cover an officer watching their movements; others looked very surly at me, as if meditating an attack. One, either deceived himself by false report, or desirous to deceive me and magnify his cause, stated the number in camp to be 17,000. None asked what I was, or whither I was going. Many stared with much apparent curiosity, or rather with indications of doubt, of suspicion, and amazement; I seemed to be unknown to all. The byeway on which I rode, was new to me; it was crooked, lonely, and to appearance very long. At every one of its many windings, I felt uncertain about what might occur—whom I should next meet, and how they might feel or act. Ample scope was thus afforded for hope and fear, for conjecture, anxiety, and foreboding, and for all the other concomitants of uncertainty and danger.

At length, when I reached a broader and better road lead-

ing from Ballynahinch to Killileagh, a youth at some distance started into view, and the animal on which he rode, one of the fleetest of its kind, was near me in a moment. Indications of secrecy, of haste, and of suspicion on meeting one unknown, were all marked in his countenance and manner; when a sudden halt, gave me a glimpse of his piercing eye and bold aspect. He seemed to be an officer reconnoitering. A few abrupt and yet hesitating questions, concerning the distance from the camp, the numbers assembled, the state, and movements of the country, hastily put and shortly answered, terminated a momentary interview, in which the mutual conjecture and jealousy of strangers, at such a crisis, were no doubt more than usually excited. As his appearance had been sudden, he was also gone in an instant, as if he rode on the wind: leaving me in a maze of thought, concerning the events of the present, and the possibilities of the future.

Arriving at the end of my journey, a more than ordinary shake of the hand—the starting tear—the silent reality and inward warmth of feeling that paralyzes speech, and is too strong for utterance—characterized the meeting with my colleagues in sacred office. One of them, as worthy a man as ever shook a hand, or dropped a sympathetic tear, is now no more. It was a time when masking and complaisance had vanished, and the heart was to be seen in all the nakedness of truth. The reader will judge whether it was a time for strong impressions. The multitude of worshippers were assembled on an occasion, solemn at all times, but now unspeakably more solemn, from the critical juncture and existing circumstances. The assembly were to be instructed and directed. Things heavenly and divine were to engage minds so much agitated by commotions on earth. Dangers were near. A battle had been fought within four miles of the place, since the congregation had parted the evening before. Some were killed who had lately been our fellow worshippers; and some who had spilled the blood of a brother, might possibly be approaching the holy table. An encampment was formed on an adjoining hill. Neighbours were on the field of war. Government was on the alert. The district was out of the peace. The military were in motion. Fame was busy with discordant reports. The issue of passing events, acquired an importance proportionate to the darkness of uncertainty that was hovering over them. Hopes were high, and fears were strong. Yet, in such singular circumstances, it will not be deemed incredible or enthusiastic, when I add, that the sacred services have seldom been observed with more strength and ardour of feeling, on the part of those who ministered, or with more apparent affection and

delight, on the part of the worshippers. The day commenced with strong emotions ; its work was conducted in peace and joy ; and the evening witnessed our parting in safety. Of my return by the same sequestered route as in the morning, little needs to be said. The evening was advanced ere I set out for home ; the hour of gadding had passed ; the run to the camp had subsided for the night ; and my mind, fatigued with labour, and already familiarized with the existing state of things, had become inactive, or was lulled to a state of heedless reverie. I had the way to myself and my trusty pony, with the slight interruption of an accidental salutation from a respectable woman, as I passed the door of her house. Her husband, immaculate in character, except as connected with the political frenzy that cost him his life, had gone to the camp in the rank of commander ; she and her children were left at home ; she wore the dishabille of mourning, her spirits were sunk, her speech was fraught with gloomy forebodings, her eyes were swollen with tears ; once, and again, and with much anxiety, she inquired what I thought respecting the issue of pending movements. * Next morning, however, as I passed her dwelling to engage again in the concluding services, connected with the dispensation of the sacrament, I found her feelings changed from an ebb of woe, to a spring tide of joy. She was gay, her eyes sparkled, her language was sprightly, and her prospects were bright. This was owing to difference of news from the place of encampment, and to opposite trains of thought set in motion by a nameless variety of circumstances.

During the hours of public worship on the Monday, the news arrived of the military being on march from Downpatrick to the insurgents' camp. Their route was close by the church where we were assembled. The congregation were much agitated. Orders were sent them to keep within doors, by a guard in advance, and upon the look-out. Yet, some impelled by strong curiosity, ventured to steal out and spy ; others stood up, and intensely gazed through the windows ; and some whispered aloud. I was the preacher. In such circumstances, it was equally difficult to proceed, and inexpedient to stop ; while it would have been imprudent to blame the confusion of the audience. Trying, therefore, to persuade them to quietness and attention, a forward hearer, more frank than welcome, unexpectedly seconded my admonition, with the abrupt exclamation, " O aye, keep your seats and listen to the gentleman." Happily, however, the worship was con-

* In most of the Presbyterian Churches, it is usual to have Divine Service on the Saturday before, and the Monday after the Sabbath, on which the Lord's Supper is dispensed.

ducted to the close without farther disturbance, and the Ministers and people were allowed to attend to their spiritual concerns, and to retire home at last, in perfect safety. The dispensation of religious ordinances in such circumstances, is so singular in modern times, and calculated to give such a peculiar cast to devotional feelings and exercises, that many of your readers may take an interest in this simple record of my own experience, and that of my Christian friends who were involved in the same difficulties.

E.

SKETCHES

OF THE

HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION IN IRELAND.

NO. III.—REIGN OF EDWARD VI.

HENRY VIII. departed this life in 1546, and was succeeded by his son Edward VI., whose mother was Jane Seymour.—This young Prince came to the throne at the age of nine years, and died a minor; so that the public acts of his reign were rather those of his ministers. Though from the amiableness of his disposition, it may be fairly conjectured, “that time only was wanting to his fame,” yet owing to his extreme youth, his personal character could have little or no influence upon the measures of government. The Duke of Somerset was appointed Protector during the minority; and was, during a considerable part of this reign, the main spring of public affairs. A council was, indeed, associated with him, but by the enegry of his character, he managed them so, that for several years he regulated affairs according to his own pleasure. Happily for the cause of religion, this accomplished and powerful statesman threw all the weight of his influence into the scale of liberal opinions. Being a warm friend to the Reformation, he earnestly set himself to correct the numerous errors which prevailed in the national church. In this task, he found a willing and able auxiliary in Archbishop Cranmer. During the preceding reign, little in the way of reform had been accomplished. With the exception of the transfer of the supremacy from the Pope to the King, the alteration in religion was but trifling. Whatever changes did occur, were made chiefly to gratify the inclination, or promote the ambition of the monarch. The people of England outran the Prince in their desire for Reformation; but they were restricted in the expressions of their wishes. Terrified by Henry’s arbitrary and tyrannical disposition, his subjects were obliged carefully to conceal any objections they might have to the system which he was pleased to adopt. His death re-